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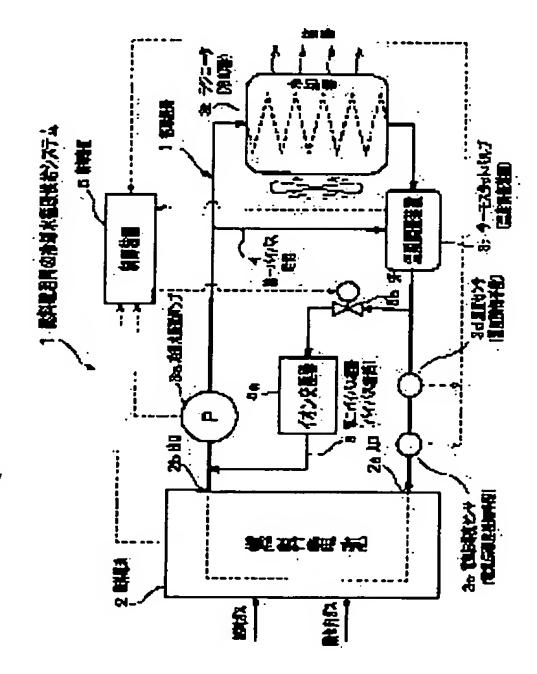
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(54) COOLING WATER CIRCULATION/FEED SYSTEM FOR FUEL CELL

(57) Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a cooling water circulation/feed system for a fuel cell allowing the miniaturization of a cooling water circulation pump, and capable of reducing power consumption. SOLUTION: This cooling water circulation/feed system has: a circulation passage for circulating the cooling water to the fuel cell; the cooling water circulation pump in the circulation passage; a cooler; and a temperature regulator for regulating the water temperature of the cooling water fed to the fuel cell by adjusting the distribution amount of the cooling water to the cooler. In the cooling water circulation/feed system, a bypass passage bypassing the fuel cell is formed in the circulation passage; an ion exchanger



for keeping the electric conductivity of the cooling water low is installed in the bypass passage; a valve for controlling a water flow rate to the ion exchanger is installed; and the fuel cell is cooled by feeding the cooling water to the fuel cell while circulating it with the cooling water circulation pump. The distribution amounts of the cooling water to the fuel cell and the ion exchanger are controlled by controlling the opening and closing of the valve according the operation state of the temperature regulator.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1]

The circulation path which circulates cooling water to a fuel cell,

It has the temperature regulator which adjusts the water temperature of the cooling water supplied to said fuel cell by fluctuating the amount of allocation of the cooling water to the cooling water circulating pump made to circulate through cooling water, the condensator which cools cooling water, and this condensator to said circulation path,

While establishing the bypass path which furthermore bypasses said fuel cell for said circulation path and forming the ion-exchange machine for maintaining the electrical conductivity of cooling water low for this bypass path, the valve which controls the amount of water flow to said ion-exchange machine is prepared,

In the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which supplies said fuel cell and cools said fuel cell while circulating cooling water with said cooling water circulating pump, The cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells characterized by controlling closing motion of said valve according to the operating state of said temperature regulator, and controlling the amount of allocation of the cooling water to said fuel cell and said ion-exchange machine. [Claim 2]

It is the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells according to claim 1 characterized by said valve restricting the amount of allocation of the cooling water to said ion-exchange machine to below a predetermined value while said temperature regulator is letting cooling water flow to said condensator.

[Claim 3]

The amount of limits of the cooling water by said valve is a cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells according to claim 2 characterized by being adjusted according to the operational status of said fuel cell.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention]

About the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which cools a fuel cell, in more detail, this invention relates to the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which formed the ion-exchange machine, in order to maintain the electrical conductivity of cooling water low. [0002]

[Description of the Prior Art]

The liquid junction phenomenon which generally minded cooling water in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which cools a fuel cell using direct cooling water (although off-gas is discharged from a fuel cell where water is mixed with a steam together, the structure and the "ground" which support the fuel cell through this water may be started) This "ground" is called "liquid junction". In order to prevent, advanced electric insulation is required of cooling water. Therefore, by forming an ion-exchange machine in the bypass path of a cooling-water-flow path, making the ion-exchange-resin layer of said ion-exchange machine let flow and circulate through the cooling water of the fixed rate of the total amounts of circulating flow, and separating the ionization ion in cooling water, the electric insulation of cooling water is maintain and fluctuating the amount of water flow according to the situation of a system is also know.

[0003]

The flow rate which needs making an ion-exchange machine let water flow in order to maintain the electric insulation of cooling water is decided by the amount of ion generated from the electrical conductivity of the cooling water at the time, and the whole system.

Generally, since material specifications etc. are selected by the amount of ion generated from the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system so that it may decrease as much as possible, the temperature of cooling water is stabilized, and when electrical conductivity is low, there are few amounts of water flow to an ion-exchange machine, and they end.

[0004]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]

However, the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the conventional fuel cells had the following problems.

- (1) Since it is necessary to reduce electrical conductivity promptly when the electrical conductivity of cooling water is close to the inside of the field which a problem generates according to a liquid junction phenomenon, or it, it will be necessary to increase immediately the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine, therefore a lot of amounts of circulating flow are needed for a circulation path.
- (2) Moreover, when electrical conductivity becomes high with a system at starting and a water temperature rise in the process which carries out warming up, it is needed, since there is a property that electrical conductivity rises in connection with a temperature rise in cooling water (pure water etc.) to make the amount of circulating flow of a circulation path increase so that the field which a problem generates may not be arrived at.

 [0005]
- (3) As for the ion exchange resin used for an ion-exchange machine, it is still more desirable from

the point of the life of ion exchange resin to control the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine, after also taking water flow temperature into consideration generally at the time of an elevated temperature in addition to electrical conductivity, since there is a property which reduces a lifting and ion exchange capacity about a pyrolysis.

(4) Moreover, although some which perform closing motion control of said valve based on the signal from an electrical conductivity detection means by which prepared the controllable valve and the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine and said ion-exchange machine was prepared in said circulation path are in the bypass path of a circulation path as a conventional technique It is necessary to set up the amount of circulating flow of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system with allowances for securing certainly the flow demand for maintaining the temperature gradient of the cooling water between the inlet-port-outlets of a fuel cell within a fitness value at the time of increase in quantity of the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine, and a sake, [this]

**1 Enlargement of a cooling water circulating pump

2 Increase of the power consumption of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system It had become ****.

[0006]

This invention aims at offering the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which can be made in order to solve said technical problem, can miniaturize the cooling water circulating pump which makes a circulation path circulate through cooling water, and can reduce the power consumption of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system.

[0007]

[Means for Solving the Problem]

The cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells indicated by claim 1 made in order to solve said technical problem The circulation path which circulates cooling water to a fuel cell, and the cooling water circulating pump which makes said circulation path circulate through cooling water, It has the temperature regulator which adjusts the water temperature of the cooling water supplied to said fuel cell by fluctuating the amount of allocation of the cooling water to the condensator which cools cooling water, and this condensator. While establishing the bypass path which furthermore bypasses said fuel cell for said circulation path and forming the ion-exchange machine for maintaining the electrical conductivity of cooling water low for this bypass path In the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which supplies said fuel cell and cools said fuel cell while preparing the valve which controls the amount of water flow to said ion-exchange machine and circulating cooling water with said cooling water circulating pump It is characterized by controlling closing motion of said valve according to the operating state of said temperature regulator, and controlling the amount of allocation of the cooling water to said fuel cell and said ion-exchange machine.

[8000]

According to invention indicated by claim 1, by controlling closing motion (the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine) of the valve prepared in the bypass path according to the operating state of allocation of a temperature regulator, i.e., the amount of the cooling water to a condensator, (heat dissipation amount required of a fuel cell), a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell can be secured, and, moreover, it can also let water flow to an ion-exchange machine.

Moreover, since it is not necessary to make the amount of circulating flow of a circulation path have and circulate through allowances like before by having controlled the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine after getting to know the amount of allocation of the cooling water to a condensator, the amount of circulating flow of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced.

Therefore, a cooling water circulating pump can be miniaturized and the power consumption of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced.
[0009]

The cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells indicated by claim 2 is a cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells according to claim 1 characterized by said valve restricting the

amount of allocation of the cooling water to said ion-exchange machine to below a predetermined value, while said temperature regulator is letting cooling water flow to said condensator. [0010]

According to invention according to claim 2, while said temperature regulator is letting cooling water flow to said condensator (i.e., when having cooled the fuel cell), said valve can restrict the amount of allocation of the cooling water to said ion-exchange machine to below a predetermined value, and a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell can be secured from an ion-exchange machine side by returning cooling water to a fuel cell side.

[0011]

It is the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells according to claim 2 characterized by adjusting the amount of limits of cooling water according [the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells indicated by claim 3] to said valve according to the operational status of said fuel cell.

[0012]

According to invention according to claim 3, allocation with a circulating water flow required in order to maintain cooling of a fuel cell, and the circulating water flow which lets water flow to an ion-exchange machine can be optimized by adjusting the amount of limits of said valve according to the operational status (the amount of generations of electrical energy, water temperature, travel of a cooling water circulating pump, etc.) of said fuel cell.

[0013]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

Hereafter, the gestalt of operation of this invention is explained with reference to <u>drawing 1</u> - <u>drawing 6</u>.

In addition, the whole block diagram showing 1 operation gestalt of the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which <u>drawing 1</u> requires for this invention and <u>drawing 2</u> The control flow chart in the case of controlling the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt and <u>drawing 3</u> Drawing and <u>drawing 4</u> which show the valve-opening property of the thermostat bulb concerning this invention Drawing and <u>drawing 5</u> which show the total amount of circulating flow of the cooling water to the output of the cooling water circulating pump concerning this invention Drawing and <u>drawing 6</u> which show the amount of water flow to the ion-exchange machine to the total amount of circulating flow of cooling water It is drawing showing each aging to the temperature of the cooling water at the time of carrying the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt in a car, the amount of lifts of a thermostat bulb, and the time amount of accelerator opening (load).

[0014]

With reference to <u>drawing 1</u>, the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt is explained first.

The cooling-water-flow distribution system 1 for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt concerning this invention should be shown in <u>drawing 1</u>,

In order to carry out conduction of the cooling water into said fuel cell 2 and to cool a fuel cell 2, inlet-port 2a of cooling water and outlet 2b are prepared in the fuel cell 2 generated according to the electrochemical reaction of the fuel gas supplied to an anode pole, and the oxidant gas supplied to a cathode pole. The circulation path 3 for circulating cooling water is connected to inlet-port 2a of this cooling water, and outlet 2b.

Thermostat bulb 3c as a temperature regulator which adjusts the temperature of the cooling water supplied to a fuel cell 2 by fluctuating the amount of allocation of the cooling water to cooling water circulating-pump 3a for circulating through cooling water, radiator 3b as a condensator which cools cooling water, and said radiator 3b to the circulation path 3 is prepared in order.

Moreover, 3d of temperature sensors is formed in the circulation path 3 near the inlet-port 2a of a fuel cell 2 as a temperature detection means for detecting the temperature of electrical conductivity sensor 3e and cooling water as an electrical conductivity detection means for detecting the electrical conductivity of cooling water.

[0015]

The first bypass path 4 which branches in the upstream of radiator 3b for the circulation path 3, and is connected to thermostat bulb 3c is established. This first bypass path 4 supplies cooling water to the direct fuel cell 2 by the change of thermostat bulb 3c, when the cooling water which carries out fuel cell 2 HE supply does not need to be cooled by radiator 3b (when the heat dissipation amount required of a fuel cell is 0).

Moreover, in order to hold the electrical conductivity of cooling water low, valve 5b which controls the amount of water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a filled up with two kinds of ion-exchange resin, i.e., cation exchange resin, and an anion exchange resin and said ion-exchange machine 5a is prepared in the second bypass path 5 which is a bypass path which bypasses the flow to said fuel cell 2 formed in the downstream of said thermostat bulb 3c. [0016]

The control unit 6 which furthermore controls closing motion of said valve 5b based on electrical input signals, such as an operating state of thermostat bulb 3c, temperature of cooling water, the amount of generations of electrical energy of a fuel cell, an output of a cooling water circulating pump, and electrical conductivity, is formed. The control unit 6 used here is an electronic control which consists an electric control circuit or RAM, ROM and CPU (or MPU), I/O, etc. of a microcomputer constituted as a core. The electrical signal about the output of a fuel cell 2 is inputted into the input section of this control unit 6, and the cooling-water-flow distribution system 1 for fuel cells is controlled by these input signals.

[0017]

Next, thermostat bulb 3c used in the important section of invention in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt which consists of such a configuration is explained.

Thermostat bulb 3c used with this operation gestalt is the cross valve of the bottom bypass system which controls a flow rate by also being called an alias name wax valve, the viscosity of the wax confined by the valve element falling if the temperature of cooling water is high, and the amount of lifts of a valve changing.

[0018]

The valve-opening property of such thermostat bulb 3c is explained with reference to <u>drawing 3</u>. In addition, the axis of abscissa of <u>drawing 3</u> is the temperature of cooling water, and an axis of ordinate is the amount of lifts of a thermostat bulb. The relation with the amount of lifts to the temperature of the cooling water of thermostat bulb 3c shows a minute hysteresis characteristic so that <u>drawing 3</u> may also show.

Although the operating state of allocation of thermostat bulb 3c, i.e., the amount of the cooling water to radiator 3b, is calculated from the amount of lifts guessed from the valve-opening property of drawing 3, and the temperature of cooling water, you may make it calculate it with the gestalt of this operation from the amount of valve opening of thermostat bulb 3c measured by the lift sensor which is not illustrated.

[0019]

Thus, in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt constituted, the control approach in the case of controlling the amount of water flow to the ion-exchange machine formed in the second bypass path by the valve is explained with reference to drawing 5 from drawing 1. In addition, explanation is given along with the control-of-flow flow chart in the case of controlling the amount of water flow to the ion-exchange machine of drawing 2. (1) Read into a control unit 6 by making the operating state of thermostat bulb 3c, the temperature of cooling water, the amount of generations of electrical energy of a fuel cell 2, the output of cooling water circulating-pump 3a, and the electrical conductivity of cooling water into an electrical input signal (S1).

(2) The flow rate partition ratio to radiator 3c judges whether it is 0% (S2).

When a flow rate partition ratio is 0% at step 2 (at the time of starting of a fuel cell 2), it controls as follows. On the other hand, when a flow rate partition ratio is not 0% at step 2 (at the time of usual operation of a fuel cell 2), it controls like [after 3-1 which carries out a postscript].

In addition, a "flow rate partition ratio" here is the value of the percentage which broke the amount of allocation of the cooling water by the side of radiator 3b by the total amount of circulating flow of

cooling water.

[0020]

<When the flow rate partition ratio to a radiator is 0%>

- 2-1) The value of the electrical conductivity detected by electrical conductivity sensor 3e judges whether they are the one or more 1st predetermined values (permission upper limit in which liquid junction does not occur) EC (S3).
- 2-2) When electrical conductivity is the one or more 1st predetermined values EC, increase the opening of valve 5b prepared in the second bypass path 5 (S7). That is, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is increased, electrical conductivity is reduced, and it returns to step 1.
- 2-3) When electrical conductivity is the less than one 1st predetermined value EC, the temperature of the cooling water further detected by temperature detection sensor 3d judges whether it is less than [predetermined value (heat deterioration initiation temperature of ion exchange resin) T1] (S4). [0021]
- 2-4) When the temperature of cooling water exceeds the predetermined value T1 in step 4, reduce the opening of valve 5b (S6). That is, in order to avoid the heat deterioration of ion exchange resin, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is reduced, and it returns to step 1.
- 2-5) On the other hand, when the temperature of cooling water is less than [predetermined value T1] in step 4, the electrical conductivity of cooling water judges further whether they are the two or more 2nd predetermined values (permission lower limit in which liquid junction does not occur) EC (S5).
- 2-6) When electrical conductivity is the two or more 2nd predetermined values EC in step 5, increase the opening of valve 5b (S7). That is, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is increased, electrical conductivity is reduced, and it returns to step 1.
- 2-7) When electrical conductivity is the less than two 2nd predetermined value EC in step 5, reduce the opening of valve 5b (S6). That is, since the electrical conductivity of cooling water and the temperature of cooling water are in the insurance field from which liquid junction is not started, in order to increase the amount of allocation of the cooling water to radiator 3c, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is reduced, and it returns to step 1.

 [0022]

<When the flow rate partition ratio to a radiator is not 0%>

3-1) In step 2, when the flow rate partition ratio of radiator 3b is not 0%, prepare a upper limit in the opening of valve 5b prepared in the second bypass path 5 from the amount of generations of electrical energy of a fuel cell 2, the temperature of cooling water, and the output of cooling water circulating-pump 3a (S8).

Here, how to prepare a upper limit is explained to the opening of valve 5b with reference to <u>drawing 4</u> and <u>drawing 5</u>. At first, the total amount of circulating flow of the cooling water which circulates through a cooling system from the relation of the temperature of cooling water and the output of cooling water circulating-pump 3a which are shown in <u>drawing 4</u> is calculated. Next, the upper limit of the amount of water flow from the amount of generations of electrical energy of the fuel cell 2 shown in <u>drawing 5</u> (calorific value) and the total amount of circulating flow of the cooling water for which the beginning was asked to ion-exchange machine 5a is calculated.

Thus, by preparing a upper limit in the opening of valve 5b, when the amount of generations of electrical energy of a fuel cell 2 is large, or when the total amount of circulating flow of cooling water is small, the amount of water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a can be reduced, the circulating water flow returned to a fuel cell 2 can be enlarged, and the cooling engine performance of a fuel cell 2 can be secured.

[0023]

- 3-2) Next, the electrical conductivity of the cooling water for which it asked from electrical conductivity sensor 3e judges whether they are the one or more 1st predetermined values (permission upper limit in which liquid junction does not occur) EC (S9).
- 3-3) When electrical conductivity is the one or more 1st predetermined values EC, the opening of valve 5b judges further whether it is under a upper limit (S13).
- 3-4) When the opening of valve 5b is under a upper limit in step 13, increase the opening of valve 5b (S14). That is, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is increased, electrical

conductivity is reduced, and it returns to step 1.

- 3-5) When the opening of valve 5b is more than a upper limit in step 13, hold the opening of valve 5b as it is (S15), and return to step 1.
 [0024]
- 3-6) When electrical conductivity is the less than one 1st predetermined value EC in step 9, the temperature of cooling water judges whether it is less than [predetermined value (heat deterioration initiation temperature of ion exchange resin) T1] (S10).
- 3-7) When the temperature of cooling water exceeds the predetermined value T1, reduce the opening of valve 5b (S12). That is, in order to avoid the heat deterioration of ion exchange resin, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is reduced, and it returns to step 1.
- 3-8) When the temperature of cooling water is less than [predetermined value T1], electrical conductivity judges further whether they are the two or more 2nd predetermined values (permission lower limit in which liquid junction does not occur) EC (S11).
- 3-9) When electrical conductivity is the two or more 2nd predetermined values EC at step 11, the opening of valve 5b judges further whether it is under a upper limit (S13). [0025]
- 3-10) When the opening of valve 5b is under a upper limit in step 13, increase the opening of valve 5b (S14). That is, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is increased, electrical conductivity is reduced, and it returns to step 1.
- 3-11) When the opening of valve 5b is more than a upper limit in step 13, hold the present opening of valve 5b as it is (S15), and return to step 1.
- 3-12) When electrical conductivity is the less than two 2nd predetermined value EC in step 11, reduce the opening of valve 5b (S12). That is, since the electrical conductivity of cooling water and the temperature of cooling water are in the insurance field from which liquid junction is not started, the amount of water flow of ion-exchange machine 5a HE is reduced, and it returns to step 1. [0026]

According to the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt which has such a configuration and an operation

(1) By controlling closing motion (the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine) of valve 5b prepared in the second bypass path 5 according to the operating state of allocation of thermostat bulb 3c, i.e., the amount of the cooling water to radiator 3b, (heat dissipation amount required of a fuel cell), a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell 2 can be secured, and, moreover, it can also let water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a.

Moreover, since it is not necessary to make the amount of circulating flow of a circulation path have and circulate through allowances like before by having controlled the amount of water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a after getting to know the amount of allocation of the cooling water to radiator 3b, the amount of circulating flow of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced. Therefore, cooling water circulating-pump 3a can be miniaturized, and the power consumption of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced.

- (2) While thermostat bulb 3c is letting cooling water flow to said radiator 3b (i.e., when having cooled the fuel cell 2), said valve 5b can restrict the amount of allocation of the cooling water to said ion-exchange machine 5a to below a predetermined value, and a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell 2 can be secured from the ion-exchange machine 5a side by returning cooling water to a fuel cell 2 side.
- (3) Allocation with a circulating water flow required in order to maintain cooling of a fuel cell 2, and the circulating water flow which lets water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a can be optimized by adjusting the amount of limits of said valve 5b according to the operational status (the amount of generations of electrical energy, water temperature, travel of cooling water circulating-pump 3a, etc.) of said fuel cell 2.

 [0027]

Next, the cooling-water-flow distribution systems for the fuel cells of such 1 operation gestalt are explained to be the temperature of the cooling water at the time of carrying in a car, and the amount of lifts of a thermostat bulb with reference to <u>drawing 1</u> and <u>drawing 6</u> about each aging to the time amount of accelerator opening.

- (1) The switch ON of the ignition key of a car.
- (2) If a fuel cell 2 starts, cooling water circulating-pump 3a will also be started, and cooling of a fuel cell 2 will be started.
- (3) The temperature of cooling water rises gradually from a room temperature, for example, 20 degrees C, with the heat of reaction within a fuel cell 2. If the temperature of cooling water becomes 70 degrees C, the amount of lifts of the valve element of thermostat bulb 3c will serve as middle opening, it lets cooling water flow and cooling of cooling water is started at the radiator 3b side. By controlling valve 5b according to the operating state (the amount of allocation of the cooling water to radiator 3b) of thermostat bulb 3c, the temperature of cooling water is stabilized with the usual operating temperature (about 80 degrees C) of a fuel cell 2. [0028]
- (4) The idling of a car is completed and the opening of an accelerator pedal opens from a close-bypass-bulb-completely condition to inside opening.
- (5) A car starts transit, and if accelerator opening is made full open and it accelerates, the amount of lifts of thermostat bulb 3c will be opened fully. After the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells is stabilized, the opening of an accelerator changes according to the rate required of a car. (6) Henceforth, by the amount of lifts of the valve element of thermostat bulb 3c changing according
- to the heat dissipation amount required of a fuel cell 2, and controlling valve 5b which controls the amount of water flow to ion-exchange machine 5a prepared in the second bypass path 5 according to the operating state of this thermostat bulb 3c, a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell 2 can be secured, and it can let water flow also to ion-exchange machine 5a. [0029]

Thus, if the cooling-water-flow distribution system 1 for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt is carried in a car, since it is not necessary to circulate the amount of circulating flow of the circulation path 3 with allowances like before and miniaturization of cooling water circulating-pump 3a and power-saving of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be attained, the tooth space which **ed when carrying in a car can be utilized effectively, and power-saving of a car can be attained.

This invention is not limited to the operation gestalt mentioned above, within limits which do not deviate from the technical range of invention, can be changed suitably and can be carried out. For example, the detection approach of the amount of circulating flow of a circulation path forms a flowmeter in a circulation path, and you may make it detect it with the electrical signal from this flowmeter instead of the output of a cooling water circulating pump.

Moreover, an electrodialyzer can also be used instead of ion-exchange machine 5a. Furthermore, the water cooling type heat exchanger of a multipipe type can also be used as a condensator in addition to radiator 3b. [0031]

[Effect of the Invention]

[0030]

According to this invention, the following effectiveness is done so as explained in full detail in said operation gestalt.

1. According to invention according to claim 1, by controlling closing motion (the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine) of the valve prepared in the bypass path according to the operating state of allocation of a temperature regulator, i.e., the amount of the cooling water to a condensator, (heat dissipation amount required of a fuel cell), a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell can be supplied, and, moreover, the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine can also be secured. Moreover, since it is not necessary to make the amount of circulating flow of a circulation path have and circulate through allowances like before by having controlled the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine after getting to know the amount of allocation of the cooling water to a condensator, the amount of circulating flow of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced. Therefore, a cooling water circulating pump can be miniaturized and the power consumption of the whole cooling-water-flow distribution system can be reduced. 2. According to invention according to claim 2, while said temperature regulator is letting cooling

water flow to said condensator (i.e., when having cooled the fuel cell), said valve can restrict the

amount of allocation of the cooling water to said ion-exchange machine to below a predetermined value, and a circulating water flow required to maintain cooling of a fuel cell can be secured from an ion-exchange machine side by returning cooling water to a fuel cell side.

3. According to invention according to claim 3, allocation with a circulating water flow required in order to maintain cooling of a fuel cell, and the circulating water flow which lets water flow to an ion-exchange machine can be optimized by adjusting the amount of limits of said valve according to the operational status of said fuel cell.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the whole block diagram showing 1 operation gestalt of the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells concerning this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is a control-of-flow flow chart in the case of controlling the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt.

[Drawing 3] It is drawing showing the valve-opening property of the thermostat bulb concerning this invention.

[Drawing 4] It is drawing showing the total amount of circulating flow of the cooling water to the output of the cooling water circulating pump concerning this invention.

[Drawing 5] It is drawing showing the amount of water flow to the ion-exchange machine to the total amount of circulating flow of cooling water.

[Drawing 6] It is drawing showing each aging to the temperature of the cooling water at the time of carrying the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells in a car, the amount of lifts of a thermostat bulb, and the time amount of accelerator opening.

[Description of Notations]

- 1 Cooling-Water-Flow Distribution System for Fuel Cells
- 2 Fuel Cell
- 3 Circulation Path
- 3a Cooling water circulating pump
- 3b Radiator (condensator)
- 3c Thermostat bulb (temperature regulator)
- 3d Temperature sensor (temperature detection means)
- 3e Electrical conductivity sensor (electrical conductivity detection means)
- 4 First Bypass Path
- 5 Second Bypass Path (Bypass Path)
- 5a Ion-exchange machine
- 5b Valve
- 6 Control Unit

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the whole block diagram showing 1 operation gestalt of the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells concerning this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is a control-of-flow flow chart in the case of controlling the amount of water flow to an ion-exchange machine in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for the fuel cells of 1 operation gestalt.

[Drawing 3] It is drawing showing the valve-opening property of the thermostat bulb concerning this invention.

[Drawing 4] It is drawing showing the total amount of circulating flow of the cooling water to the output of the cooling water circulating pump concerning this invention.

[Drawing 5] It is drawing showing the amount of water flow to the ion-exchange machine to the total amount of circulating flow of cooling water.

[Drawing 6] It is drawing showing each aging to the temperature of the cooling water at the time of carrying the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells in a car, the amount of lifts of a thermostat bulb, and the time amount of accelerator opening.

[Description of Notations]

- 1 Cooling-Water-Flow Distribution System for Fuel Cells
- 2 Fuel Cell
- 3 Circulation Path
- 3a Cooling water circulating pump
- 3b Radiator (condensator)
- 3c Thermostat bulb (temperature regulator)
- 3d Temperature sensor

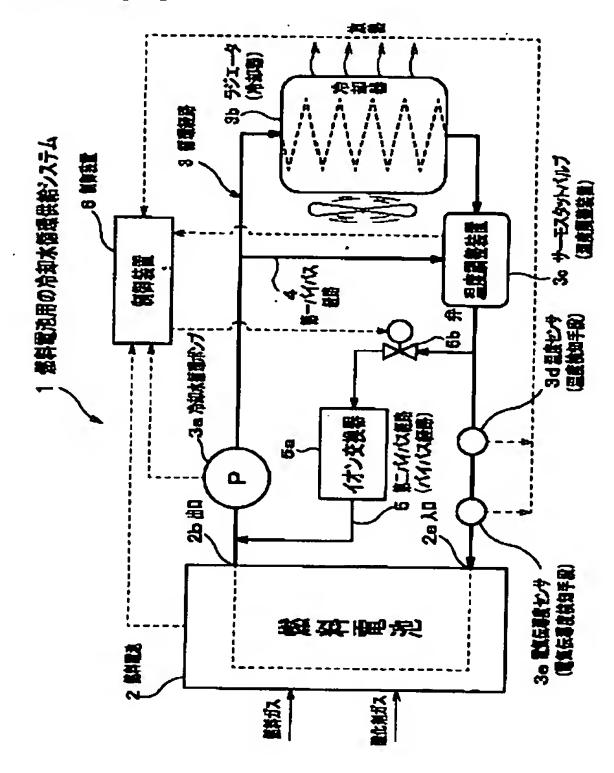
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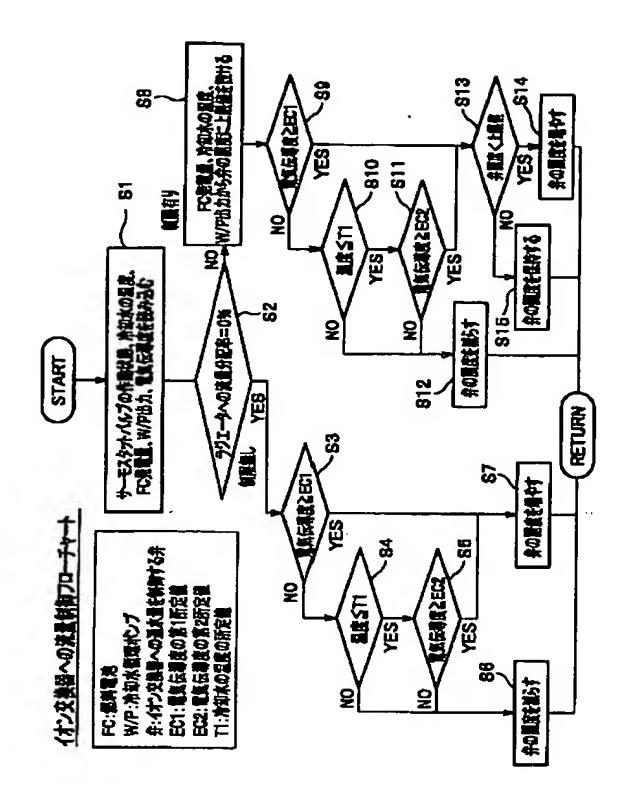
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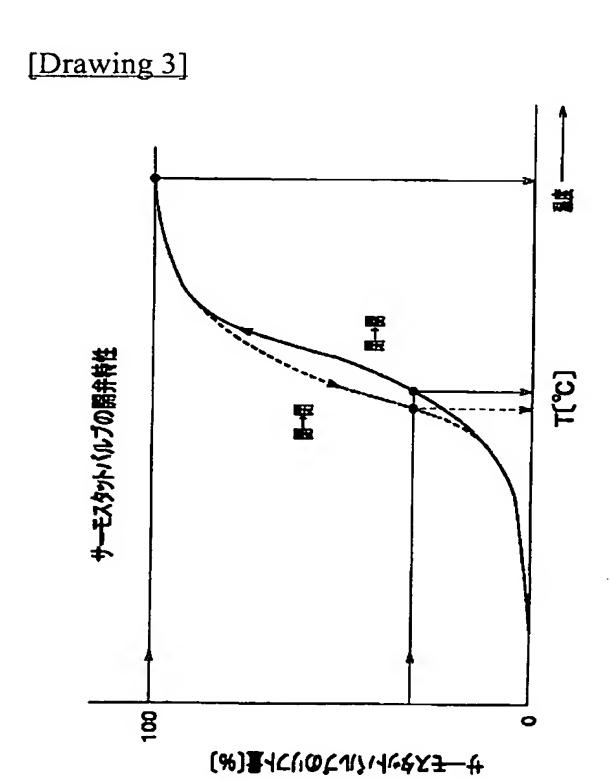
DRAWINGS

[Drawing 1]

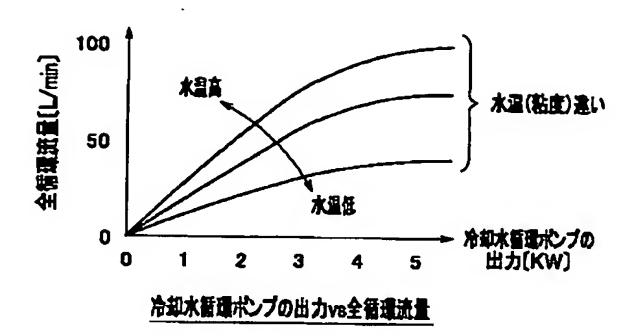


[Drawing 2]

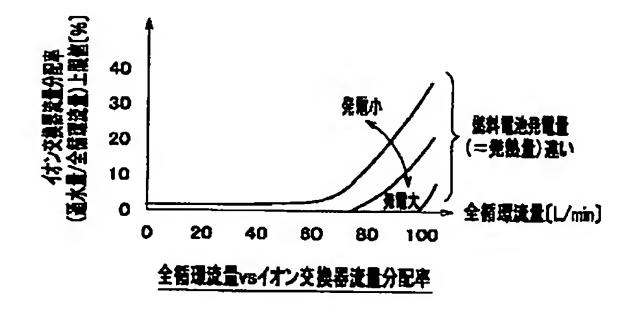




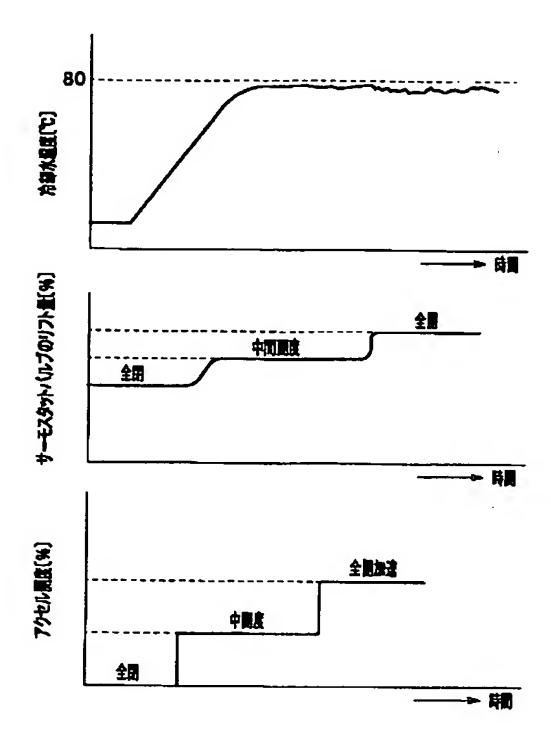
[Drawing 4]



[Drawing 5]



[Drawing 6]



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CORRECTION OR AMENDMENT

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[Procedure amendment 1]

[Document to be Amended] Specification

[Item(s) to be Amended] 0002

[Method of Amendment] Modification

[The contents of amendment]

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art]

The liquid junction phenomenon which generally minded cooling water in the cooling-water-flow distribution system for fuel cells which cools a fuel cell using direct cooling water (the structure and the "ground" which support the fuel cell through cooling water may be started from the high-pressure live part which touches the cooling water inside a fuel cell) This "ground" is called "liquid junction". In order to prevent, advanced electric insulation is required of cooling water.

Therefore, by forming an ion-exchange machine in the bypass path of a cooling-water-flow path, making the ion-exchange-resin layer of said ion-exchange machine let flow and circulate through the cooling water of the fixed rate of the total amounts of circulating flow, and separating the ionization ion in cooling water, the electric insulation of cooling water is maintain and fluctuating the amount of water flow according to the situation of a system is also know.

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(54) 【発明の名称】燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム

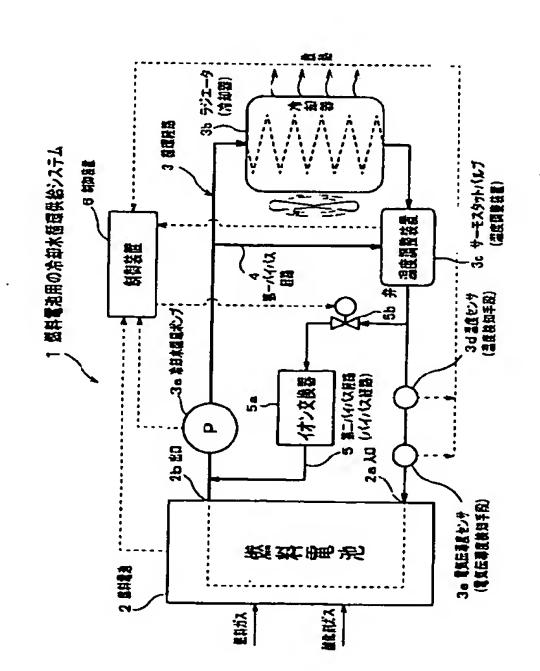
(57) 【要約】

【課題】冷却水循環ポンプを小型化することができ、かつ、消費電力を低減することができる燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを提供すること。

【解決手段】燃料電池に対して冷却水を循環させる循環経路と、前記循環経路に、冷却水循環ポンプと、冷却器と、この冷却器への冷却水の配分量を増減することによって前記燃料電池へ供給する冷却水の水温を調整する温度調整装置とを有し、さらに前記循環経路に前記燃料電池を迂回するバイパス経路を設け、このバイパス経路に冷却水の電気伝導度を低く維持するイオン交換器を設けると共に、前記イオン交換器への通水量を制御する弁を設け、前記冷却水循環ポンプで冷却水を循環させながら前記燃料電池に供給して前記燃料電池を冷却する燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいて、前記温度調整装置の作動状態に応じて前記弁の開閉を制御して、前記燃料電池と前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を制御するようにした。

【選択図】

図1 ·



Fターム(参考) 5H027 AA02 CC06 CC15 KK46 MM16

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】

燃料電池に対して冷却水を循環させる循環経路と、

前記循環経路に、冷却水を循環させる冷却水循環ポンプと、冷却水を冷却する冷却器と、この冷却器への冷却水の配分量を増減することによって前記燃料電池へ供給する冷却水の水温を調整する温度調整装置とを有し、

さらに前記循環経路に前記燃料電池を迂回するバイパス経路を設けて、このバイパス経路 に冷却水の電気伝導度を低く維持するためのイオン交換器を設けると共に、前記イオン交 換器への通水量を制御する弁を設け、

前記冷却水循環ポンプで冷却水を循環させながら前記燃料電池に供給して前記燃料電池を冷却する燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいて、

前記温度調整装置の作動状態に応じて前記弁の開閉を制御して、前記燃料電池と前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を制御することを特徴とする燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム。

【請求項2】

前記温度調整装置が前記冷却器へ冷却水を通水しているときは、前記弁が前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を所定値以下に制限することを特徴とする請求項1に記載の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム。

【請求項3】

前記弁による冷却水の制限量は、前記燃料電池の運転状態に応じて調節されることを特徴 20とする請求項2に記載の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】

本発明は、燃料電池を冷却する燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムに関し、更に詳しくは、冷却水の電気伝導度を低く維持するためにイオン交換器を設けた燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムに関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】

一般に、燃料電池を直接冷却水を用いて冷却する燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいては、冷却水を介した液絡現象(蒸気と水が一緒に混じった状態で燃料電池からオフガスが排出されるが、この水を通じて燃料電池を支えている構造体と「地絡」を起こす場合がある。この「地絡」を「液絡」という。)を防止するため、冷却水には高度な電気絶縁性が要求される。

そのためイオン交換器を冷却水循環経路のバイパス経路に設け、全循環流量のうちの一定割合の冷却水を前記イオン交換器のイオン交換樹脂層に通水・循環させて冷却水中の電離イオンを分離することによって冷却水の電気絶縁性を維持しており、その通水量をシステムの状況に応じて増減することも知られている。

[0003]

冷却水の電気絶縁性を維持するために、イオン交換器に通水させることが必要な流量は、 その時点の冷却水の電気伝導度、及びシステム全体から発生するイオン量により決まる。 一般に、冷却水循環供給システム全体から発生するイオン量は、極力少なくなる様に材料 仕様等が選定されているため、冷却水の温度が安定し電気伝導度が低い場合には、イオン 交換器への通水量は少なくて済む。

[0004]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】

しかしながら、従来の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムは、以下のような問題があった。

(1) 冷却水の電気伝導度が液絡現象により問題が発生する領域内、又はそれに近い場合には速やかに電気伝導度を低下させる必要があるので、イオン交換器への通水量を早急に

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増やす必要が生じ、そのため循環経路には大量の循環流量が必要となる。

(2)また、冷却水(純水等)には温度上昇に伴い電気伝導度が上昇する特性があるため、システムを起動・暖機する過程での水温上昇に伴い電気伝導度が高くなるときには、問題が発生する領域に達しないように、循環経路の循環流量を増加させることが必要となる

[0005]

(3) さらに、イオン交換器に使用されるイオン交換樹脂は、一般に高温時に熱分解を起こし、イオン交換容量を減じてしまう性質があるため、電気伝導度に加えて通水温度も考慮した上でイオン交換器への通水量を制御するのがイオン交換樹脂の寿命の点からは望ましい。

(4) また、従来技術として、循環経路のバイパス経路に、イオン交換器と前記イオン交換器への通水量を制御可能な弁とを設け、前記循環経路に設けた電気伝導度検知手段からの信号に基づき前記弁の開閉制御を行うものがあるが、イオン交換器への通水量の増量時に、燃料電池の入口一出口間の冷却水の温度差を適性値以内に保つための必要流量を確実に確保するには冷却水循環供給システム全体の循環流量を余裕を持って設定する必要があり、このために、

▲ 1 ▼冷却水循環ポンプの大型化

▲2▼冷却水循環供給システム全体の消費電力の増大

の原因となっていた。

[0006]

本発明は、前記課題を解決するためになされたものであって、循環経路に冷却水を循環させる冷却水循環ポンプを小型化することができ、かつ、冷却水循環供給システム全体の消費電力を低減することができる燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを提供することを目的とする。

[0007]

【課題を解決するための手段】

前記課題を解決するためになされた請求項1に記載された燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムは、燃料電池に対して冷却水を循環させる循環経路と、前記循環経路に、冷却水を循環させる冷却水循環ポンプと、冷却水を冷却する冷却器と、この冷却器への冷却水の配分量を増減することによって前記燃料電池を迂回するバイパス経路を設けて、このバイパス経路に冷却水の電気伝導度を低く維持するためのイオン交換器を設けると共に、前記イオン交換器への通水量を制御する弁を設け、前記冷却水循環ポンプで冷却水を循環させながら前記燃料電池に供給して前記燃料電池を冷却する燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいて、前記温度調整装置の作動状態に応じて前記弁の開閉を制御して、前記燃料電池と前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を制御することを特徴とするものである

[0008]

請求項1に記載された発明によると、温度調整装置の作動状態、すなわち冷却器への冷却水の配分量(燃料電池の放熱要求量)に応じて、バイパス経路に設けた弁の開閉(イオン交換器への通水量)を制御することにより、燃料電池の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保することができ、しかもイオン交換器へ通水することもできる。

また、冷却器への冷却水の配分量を知った上でイオン交換器への通水量を制御するようにしたことで、従来のように循環経路の循環流量に余裕を持って循環させる必要がないので、冷却水循環供給システム全体の循環流量を減らすことができる。

従って、冷却水循環ポンプを小型化することができ、かつ、冷却水循環供給システム全体 の消費電力を低減することができる。

[0009]

請求項2に記載された燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムは、前記温度調整装置が前記冷却器へ冷却水を通水しているときは、前記弁が前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を

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所定値以下に制限することを特徴とする請求項1に記載の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムである。

[0010]

請求項2に記載の発明によると、前記温度調整装置が前記冷却器へ冷却水を通水しているとき、すなわち燃料電池を冷却しているときは、前記弁により前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を所定値以下に制限して、イオン交換器側から燃料電池側へ冷却水を戻してやることで、燃料電池の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保することができる。

[0011]

請求項3に記載された燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムは、前記弁による冷却水の制限量は、前記燃料電池の運転状態に応じて調節されることを特徴とする請求項2に記載の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムである。

[0012]

請求項3に記載の発明によると、前記弁の制限量を、前記燃料電池の運転状態(発電量、水温、冷却水循環ポンプの作動量等)に応じて調節することにより、燃料電池の冷却を維持するために必要な冷却水量とイオン交換器へ通水する冷却水量との配分を最適化することができる。

[0013]

【発明の実施の形態】

尚、図1は、本発明に係る燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムの一実施形態を示す全体の構成図、図2は、一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいてイオン交換器への通水量を制御する場合の制御フローチャート、図3は、本発明に係るサーモスタットバルブの開弁特性を示す図、図4は、本発明に係る冷却水循環ポンプの出力に対する冷却水の全循環流量を示す図、図5は、冷却水の全循環流量に対するイオン交換器への通水量を示す図、図6は、一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを東西に燃料

以下、本発明の実施の形態について図1~図6を参照して説明する。

水量を示す図、図6は、一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを車両に搭載した場合の冷却水の温度、サーモスタットバルブのリフト量、アクセル開度(負荷)の時間に対するそれぞれの経時変化を示す図である。

[0014]

最初に図1を参照して一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムについて説明する。

本発明に係る一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム1は、図1に示すように

アノード極に供給される燃料ガスとカソード極に供給される酸化剤ガスとの電気化学反応により発電する燃料電池2には、前記燃料電池2内へ冷却水を通流させて燃料電池2を冷却するために冷却水の入口2aと出口2bとが設けられている。この冷却水の入口2aと出口2bには、冷却水を循環させるための循環経路3が接続されている。

循環経路3には、冷却水を循環するための冷却水循環ポンプ3aと、冷却水を冷却する冷却器としてのラジエータ3bと、前記ラジエータ3bへの冷却水の配分量を増減することで燃料電池2へ供給する冷却水の温度を調整する温度調整装置としてのサーモスタットバルブ3cとが順番に設けられている。

また、燃料電池2の入口2a近傍の循環経路3には、冷却水の電気伝導度を検知するための電気伝導度検知手段として電気伝導度センサ3e及び冷却水の温度を検知するための温度検知手段として温度センサ3dが設けられている。

[0015]

循環経路3にはラジエータ3bの上流で分岐しサーモスタットバルブ3cに接続される第一バイパス経路4が設けられている。この第一バイパス経路4は燃料電池2へ供給する冷却水をラジエータ3bで冷却する必要がない場合(燃料電池の放熱要求量が0の場合)には、サーモスタットバルブ3cの切り替えによって直接燃料電池2へ冷却水を供給する。また、冷却水の電気伝導度を低く保持するため、前記サーモスタットバルブ3cの下流側に設けられた前記燃料電池2への流れを迂回するバイパス経路である第二バイパス経路5

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には、2種類のイオン交換樹脂、すなわちカチオン交換樹脂及びアニオン交換樹脂を充填したイオン交換器5aと前記イオン交換器5aへの通水量を制御する弁5bとが設けられている。

[0016]

さらにサーモスタットバルブ3cの作動状態、冷却水の温度、燃料電池の発電量、冷却水循環ポンプの出力、電気伝導度等の電気入力信号に基づいて前記弁5bの開閉を制御する制御装置6が設けられている。ここで使用される制御装置6は、電気的制御回路、又は、RAM、ROM、CPU(又はMPU)及びI/O等を中心として構成されたマイクロコンピュータからなる電子制御装置である。この制御装置6の入力部には燃料電池2の出力に関する電気信号が入力されこれらの入力信号により燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム1が制御される。

[0017]

次に、このような構成からなる一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいて発明の要部で使用されるサーモスタットバルブ3cについて説明する。

本実施形態で使用されるサーモスタットバルブ3cは、別名ワックス弁とも言われ、冷却水の温度が高いと弁体に封じこまれたワックスの粘度が低下し、弁のリフト量が変化することで流量を制御するボトムバイパス式の三方弁である。

[0018]

このようなサーモスタットバルブ3cの開弁特性について図3を参照して説明する。尚、図3の横軸は冷却水の温度、縦軸はサーモスタットバルブのリフト量である。図3からも判るように、サーモスタットバルブ3cの冷却水の温度に対するリフト量との関係は、微小なヒステリシス特性を示す。

本実施の形態では、サーモスタットバルブ3cの作動状態、すなわちラジエータ3bへの冷却水の配分量は、図3の開弁特性と冷却水の温度とから推測したリフト量から求めているが、図示しないリフトセンサで計測したサーモスタットバルブ3cの開弁量から求めるようにしても良い。

[0019]

このように構成される一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいて、第二バイパス経路に設けたイオン交換器への通水量を弁で制御する場合の制御方法について図1から図5を参照して説明する。尚、説明は図2のイオン交換器への通水量を制御する場合の流量制御フローチャートに沿って行う。

(1)サーモスタットバルブ3cの作動状態、冷却水の温度、燃料電池2の発電量、冷却水循環ポンプ3aの出力、冷却水の電気伝導度を電気入力信号として制御装置6に読み込む(S1)。

(2) ラジエータ3 c への流量分配率が0%かどうかを判断する(S2)。

ステップ2で流量分配率が0%のとき(燃料電池2の起動時)は以下のように制御する。 一方、ステップ2で流量分配率が0%でないとき(燃料電池2の通常運転時)は、後記する3-1)以後のように制御する。

尚、ここでいう「流量分配率」とはラジエータ3b側への冷却水の配分量を冷却水の全循環流量で割った百分率の値である。

[0020]

くラジエータへの流量分配率が0%の場合>

2-1) 電気伝導度センサ3 e により検知した電気伝導度の値が、第1所定値(液絡が起きない許容上限値)EC1以上かどうかを判断する(S3)。

2-2) 電気伝導度が第1所定値EC1以上の場合は、第二バイパス経路5に設けた弁5bの開度を増やす(S7)。すなわちイオン交換器5aへの通水量を増やして電気伝導度を低下させ、ステップ1に戻る。

2-3) 電気伝導度が第1所定値EC1未満の場合は、さらに温度検知センサ3 dにより検知した冷却水の温度が、所定値(イオン交換樹脂の熱劣化開始温度) T1以下かどうかを判断する(S4)。

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[0021]

2-4) ステップ4において冷却水の温度が所定値T1を超える場合は、弁5bの開度を減らす(S6)。すなわちイオン交換樹脂の熱劣化を避けるためイオン交換器5aへの通水量を減らし、ステップ1に戻る。

2-5)一方、ステップ4において冷却水の温度が所定値T1以下の場合は、さらに冷却水の電気伝導度が第2所定値(液絡が起きない許容下限値)EC2以上かどうかを判断する(S5)。

2-6) ステップ 5 において電気伝導度が第 2 所定値 E C 2 以上の場合は、弁 5 b の開度を増やす (S 7)。すなわちイオン交換器 5 a への通水量を増やして電気伝導度を低下させ、ステップ 1 に戻る。

2-7)ステップ5において電気伝導度が第2所定値EC2未満の場合は、弁5bの開度を減らす(S6)。すなわち冷却水の電気伝導度及び冷却水の温度が液絡を起こさない安全領域にあるので、ラジエータ3cへの冷却水の配分量を増やすためイオン交換器5aへの通水量を減らし、ステップ1に戻る。

[0022]

くラジエータへの流量分配率が 0 %でない場合>

3-1)ステップ2において、ラジエータ3bの流量分配率が0%でない場合は、燃料電池2の発電量、冷却水の温度、冷却水循環ポンプ3aの出力から第二バイパス経路5に設けた弁5bの開度に上限値を設ける(S8)。

ここで、弁5 bの開度に上限値を設ける方法について図4及び図5を参照して説明する。最初、図4に示す冷却水の温度と冷却水循環ポンプ3 a の出力との関係から冷却系を循環する冷却水の全循環流量を求める。次に、図5に示す燃料電池2の発電量(発熱量)と最初に求めた冷却水の全循環流量とから、イオン交換器5 a への通水量の上限値を求める。このように弁5 b の開度に上限値を設けることで、燃料電池2の発電量が大きいとき、又は冷却水の全循環流量が小さいときは、イオン交換器5 a への通水量を低減して、燃料電池2 に戻す冷却水量を大きくし、燃料電池2 の冷却性能を確保することができる。

[0023]

3-2)次に、電気伝導度センサ3eから求めた冷却水の電気伝導度が第1所定値(液絡が起きない許容上限値)EC1以上かどうかを判断する(S9)。

3-3) 電気伝導度が第1所定値EC1以上の場合は、さらに弁5bの開度が上限値未満かどうかを判断する(S13)。

3-4)ステップ13において弁5bの開度が上限値未満の場合は、弁5bの開度を増やす(S14)。すなわちイオン交換器5aへの通水量を増やして電気伝導度を低下させ、ステップ1に戻る。

3-5)ステップ 1 3 において弁 5 b の開度が上限値以上の場合は、弁 5 b の開度をそのまま保持し(S 1 5)、ステップ 1 に戻る。

[0024]

3-6) ステップ 9 において電気伝導度が第 1 所定値EC 1 未満の場合は、冷却水の温度が所定値(イオン交換樹脂の熱劣化開始温度)T 1 以下かどうかを判断する(S 1 0)。3-7) 冷却水の温度が所定値T 1 を超える場合は、弁 5 b の開度を減らす(S 1 2)。すなわちイオン交換樹脂の熱劣化を避けるためイオン交換器 5 a への通水量を減らし、ステップ 1 に戻る。

3-8) 冷却水の温度が所定値T1以下の場合は、さらに電気伝導度が第2所定値(液絡が起きない許容下限値)EC2以上かどうかを判断する(S11)。

3-9)ステップ11で電気伝導度が第2所定値EC2以上の場合は、さらに弁5bの開度が上限値未満かどうかを判断する(S13)。

[0025]

3-10)ステップ13において弁5bの開度が上限値未満の場合は、弁5bの開度を増やす(S14)。すなわちイオン交換器5aへの通水量を増やして電気伝導度を低下させ、ステップ1に戻る。

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3-11)ステップ13において弁5bの開度が上限値以上の場合は、弁5bの現在の開度をそのまま保持し(S15)、ステップ1に戻る。

3-12)ステップ11において電気伝導度が第2所定値EC2未満の場合は、弁5bの 開度を減らす(S12)。すなわち冷却水の電気伝導度及び冷却水の温度が液絡を起こさ ない安全領域にあるので、イオン交換器5aへの通水量を減らし、ステップ1に戻る。

[0026]

このような構成と作用を有する一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムによれば、

(1)サーモスタットバルブ3cの作動状態、すなわちラジエータ3bへの冷却水の配分量(燃料電池の放熟要求量)に応じて、第二バイパス経路5に設けた弁5bの開閉(イオン交換器への通水量)を制御することにより、燃料電池2の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保することができ、しかもイオン交換器5aへ通水することもできる。

また、ラジエータ3bへの冷却水の配分量を知った上でイオン交換器5aへの通水量を制御するようにしたことで、従来のように循環経路の循環流量に余裕を持って循環させる必要がないので、冷却水循環供給システム全体の循環流量を減らすことができる。従って、冷却水循環ポンプ3aを小型化することができ、かつ、冷却水循環供給システム全体の消費電力を低減することができる。

(2) サーモスタットバルブ3cが前記ラジエータ3bへ冷却水を通水しているとき、すなわち燃料電池2を冷却しているときは、前記弁5bにより前記イオン交換器5aへの冷却水の配分量を所定値以下に制限して、イオン交換器5a側から燃料電池2側へ冷却水を戻してやることで、燃料電池2の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保することができる。

(3)前記弁5bの制限量を、前記燃料電池2の運転状態(発電量、水温、冷却水循環ポンプ3aの作動量等)に応じて調節することにより、燃料電池2の冷却を維持するために必要な冷却水量とイオン交換器5aへ通水する冷却水量との配分を最適化することができる。

[0027]

次に、このような一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを車両に搭載した場合の冷却水の温度と、サーモスタットバルブのリフト量と、アクセル開度の時間に対する それぞれの経時変化について図1及び図6を参照して説明する。

(1) 車両のイグニッションキーのスイッチON。

(2)燃料電池2が起動すると冷却水循環ポンプ3aも起動し、燃料電池2の冷却が開始される。

(3) 冷却水の温度は、燃料電池 2 内での反応熱により室温、例えば 2 0 ℃から徐々に上昇する。冷却水の温度が例えば 7 0 ℃になるとサーモスタットバルブ 3 c の弁体のリフト量が中間開度となり、ラジエータ 3 b 側に冷却水が通水されて冷却水の冷却が開始される。サーモスタットバルブ 3 c の作動状態(ラジエータ 3 b への冷却水の配分量)に応じて弁 5 b を制御することで、冷却水の温度が燃料電池 2 の通常の作動温度(約 8 0 ℃)で安定する。

[0028]

(4)車両のアイドリングが終了し、アクセルペダルの開度が全閉状態から中開度まで開放する。

(5) 車両が走行を開始し、アクセル開度を全開にして加速すると、サーモスタットバルブ3cのリフト量が全開となる。燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムが安定した後は、車両に要求される速度に応じてアクセルの開度は変化する。

(6)以後、燃料電池2の放熱要求量に応じてサーモスタットバルブ3cの弁体のリフト量が変化し、このサーモスタットバルブ3cの作動状態に応じて第二バイパス経路5に設けられたイオン交換器5aへの通水量を制御する弁5bを制御することにより、燃料電池2の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保し、かつ、イオン交換器5aへも通水することができる。

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[0029]

このようにして、一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム1を車両に搭載すれば、従来のように循環経路3の循環流量に余裕をもって循環させる必要がないため冷却水循環ポンプ3aの小型化、かつ、冷却水循環供給システム全体の省電力化が図れるので、車両に搭載したときの空いたスペースを有効に活用でき、かつ、車両の省電力化を図ることができる。

[0030]

本発明は、上述した実施形態に限定されるものではなく、発明の技術的範囲を逸脱しない範囲内で適宜変更して実施可能である。

例えば、循環経路の循環流量の検知方法は、冷却水循環ポンプの出力の替わりに、循環経路に流量計を設けてこの流量計からの電気信号により検知するようにしても良い。

また、イオン交換器5aの替わりに電気透析装置を使用することもできる。

さらに、冷却器としてラジエータ3b以外に多管式の水冷式熱交換器を使用することもできる。

[0031]

【発明の効果】

前記実施形態に詳述したように、本発明によれば、以下の効果を奏する。

1.請求項1に記載の発明によれば、温度調整装置の作動状態、すなわち冷却器への冷却水の配分量(燃料電池の放熱要求量)に応じて、バイパス経路に設けた弁の開閉(イオン交換器への通水量)を制御することにより、燃料電池の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を供給することができ、しかもイオン交換器への通水量も確保することができる。また、冷却器への冷却水の配分量を知った上でイオン交換器への通水量を制御するようにしたことで、従来のように循環経路の循環流量に余裕を持って循環させる必要がないので、冷却水循環供給システム全体の循環流量を減らすことができる。従って、冷却水循環ポンプを小型化することができ、かつ、冷却水循環供給システム全体の消費電力を低減することができる。

2. 請求項2に記載の発明によれば、前記温度調整装置が前記冷却器へ冷却水を通水しているとき、すなわち燃料電池を冷却しているときは、前記弁により前記イオン交換器への冷却水の配分量を所定値以下に制限して、イオン交換器側から燃料電池側へ冷却水を戻してやることで、燃料電池の冷却を維持するのに必要な冷却水量を確保することができる。3. 請求項3に記載の発明によれば、前記弁の制限量を、前記燃料電池の運転状態に応じて調節することにより、燃料電池の冷却を維持するために必要な冷却水量とイオン交換器へ通水する冷却水量との配分を最適化することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明に係る燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムの一実施形態を示す全体の構成図である。

【図2】一実施形態の燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムにおいてイオン交換器への通水量を制御する場合の流量制御フローチャートである。

【図3】本発明に係るサーモスタットバルブの開弁特性を示す図である。

【図4】本発明に係る冷却水循環ポンプの出力に対する冷却水の全循環流量を示す図であ 40 る。

【図5】冷却水の全循環流量に対するイオン交換器への通水量を示す図である。

【図 6 】燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システムを車両に搭載した場合の冷却水の温度、サーモスタットバルブのリフト量、アクセル開度の時間に対するそれぞれの経時変化を示す図である。

【符号の説明】

1 燃料電池用の冷却水循環供給システム

2 燃料電池

3 循環経路

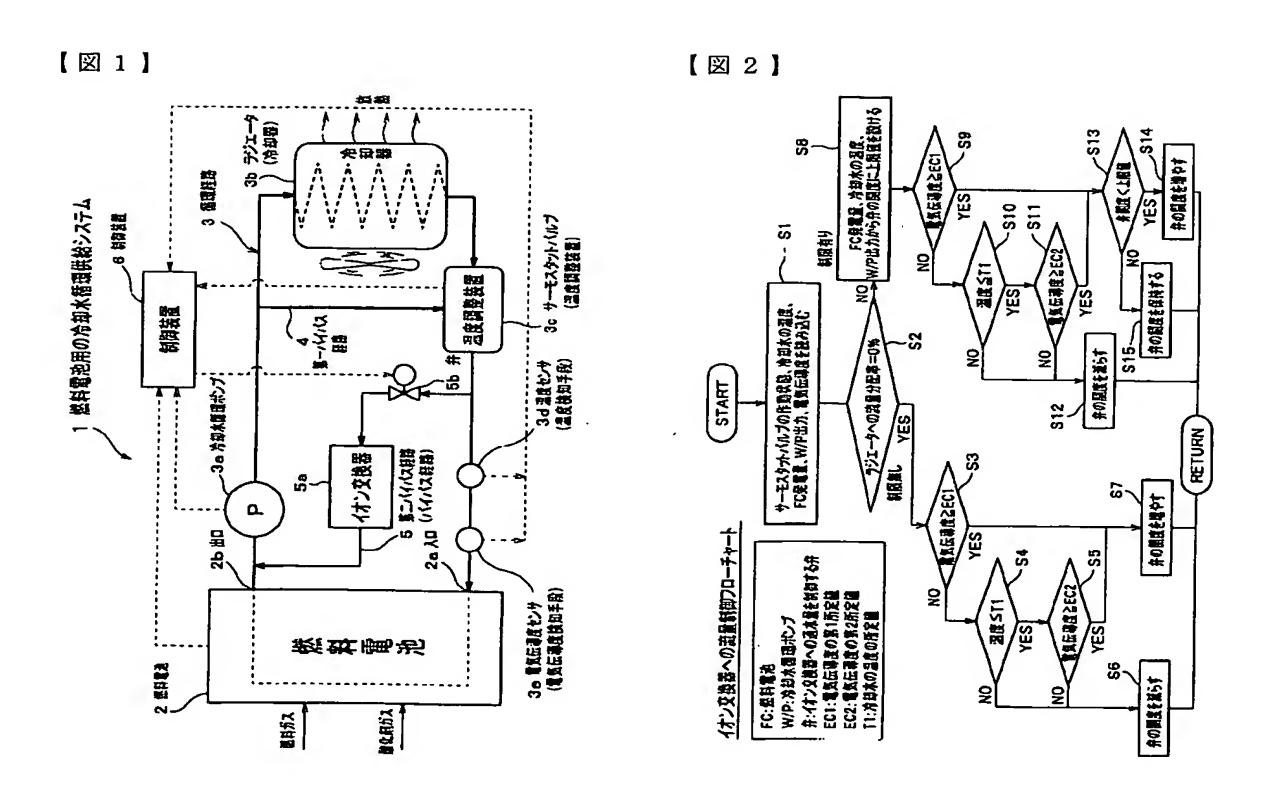
3 a 冷却水循環ポンプ

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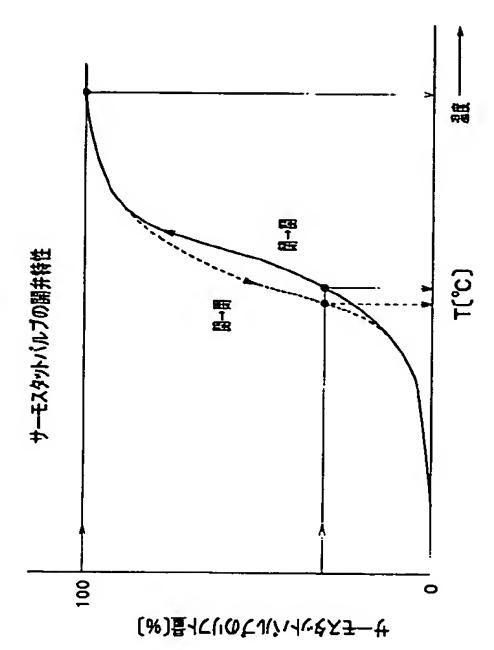
10

20

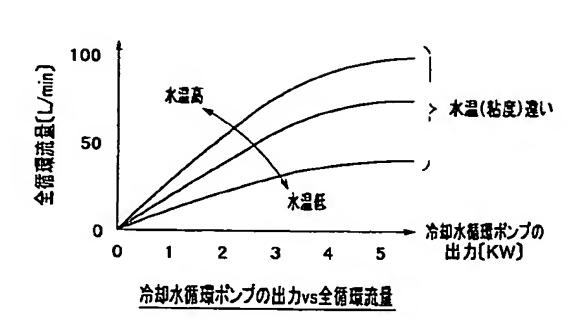
```
3 b
              ラジエータ (冷却器)
              サーモスタットバルブ (温度調整装置)
3 c
3 d
              温度センサ (温度検知手段)
              電気伝導度センサ (電気伝導度検知手段)
3 e
              第一バイパス経路
4
5
              第二バイパス経路 (バイパス経路)
5 a
              イオン交換器
5 b
              弁
6
              制御装置
```



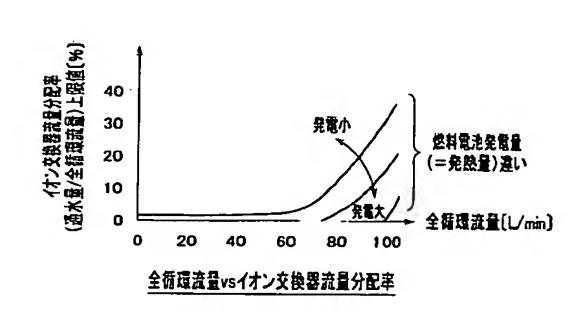
[図3]



[図4]



[図5]



【図6】

